

Sports abound in Lil' Cooperstown



Brad Heineke Clackamas Print

memorabilia covers the walls of Lil' Cooperstown Pub & Grill. Lil' Cooperstown has four locations, Oregon City being the most popular for Clackamas Community College students.

By Brad Heineke

The Clackamas Print

I approached the Street of Dreams-like building, and this was more than a mere sports bar. When I walked through the lofty wood and glass doors, I was up to realize that I had entered a mecca of sports memorabilia.

Walking past tables of patrons with beautifully prepared dishes, savory scents struck me. When I picked up the huge, full-color menu I knew bar and grill was understatement. My first impressions of Lil' Cooperstown were a grand slam.

The Oregon City Lil' Cooperstown is located on Main Avenue, just a quarter mile from Clackamas Community College. It is the newest and now the busiest of four Lil' Cooperstown locations.

The business name is a reference to Cooperstown, which is home to the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. Ken Arrigotti opened the first one in West Linn seven years ago. The other locations are in Newberg and Hillsboro.

The Oregon City establishment is a uniquely upscale establishment appointed with class furnishings and quality fixtures.

The service, food and overall atmosphere are great, and there is no denying that the most impressive part is the display of sports collectibles. There are original autographed jerseys, photo enlargements, paintings, baseballs, bats and sticks of all kinds. Each is individually framed and beautifully displayed. There is a square inch of space left in any one spot on the 18-foot tall walls.

When I entered the men's room, I found a bucket of sports. In awe, I had to count, 76 collectibles in original autographed framed sport photos! But this was only a drop in the bucket compared to the other items throughout the rest of the joint. There are autographed photos and jerseys from the sports legends of all time and pieces from recent current local stars, both pro and collegiate.

Asked Arrigotti if he would disclose how much the collection at the O.C. location was valued. "Well, I'll tell you this," he said smiling, "we spent over \$45,000 on the pieces." He later disclosed the original collection for this location was over \$100,000. "The only things that aren't originally hand-signed are prints of originals — Babe Ruth and Ty Cobb."

Another intriguing feature of this sports fan's haven is a 42" and 50" High-Definition LCD television that are fueled by both Comcast and Direct TV. Most all the optional sports packages, so no fan is left out.

The immense interior is mostly a large great room, and all monitors and decor can be seen from any location. The staff does a great job of keeping a variety of top events showing and are more than willing to accommodate requests. There have always been good crowds when I have been there for playoff games, and it has not been overcrowded, which was nice.

The biggest sports crowds definitely come with the season," said manager Cager Creolo. "The

Super Bowl and Civil War games were a kick."

Lil' Cooperstown is on par with the under-21 crowd too. There are more than 22 booths or tables which welcome all ages.

"I consider our business not a sports bar but a family restaurant with a sports theme," said Arrigotti.

This is backed by the fact that 80 percent of the business' revenue is from food sales. It is also worth noting that they are typically open until 10 p.m. on weeknights and 11 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.

The layout is excellent for a fun, social environment. There is a center lounge area that seats more than 60 and is open and only separated from the "restaurant section" by booths with their 4-foot tall walls.

The bar is like an altar to athleticism and alcohol. Framed by HDTVs and more colorful memorabilia is an impressive top shelf display and 14 different draft beer faucets.

The fun and friendly staff is based from this area.

There is a separate enclosed video lottery room, then off to the side there is an open but semi-private banquet room.

"It gets used often. People have private parties like birthdays, sometimes business meetings, and community groups use it," said server Shawna Tracy. "There's no charge, and it can be reserved or used on a first-come basis."

The menu selection is as incredible as the atmosphere. It is nine pages full of fantastic offerings set in a fun sports theme with color photo highlights. It can be almost overwhelming deciding what to order. There are 24 appetizers, 14 different salads, 24 sandwiches and 18 burgers, plus many other categories. Even the kids' menu has 25 items!

Tempted by the vast choices, we went with the Scoreboard Sampler to kick things off. It was a huge platter with Buffalo wings (with your choice of four different sauces), mozzarella sticks, potato skins and Tex-Mex egg rolls. My favorite of the sauces is the in-house chipotle mayo. The Texas egg rolls were a tantalizing taste treat. They had a perfectly crunchy and warm shell and a trophy worthy southwestern filling with cheese, chipotle peppers, chicken, beans, cilantro and more.

For round two, I chose the cowboy burger. It has bacon, cheddar, whiskey barbecue sauce, a fried egg and an onion ring about the size of a fast food bun. It was a home run, possibly the best burger I have ever had and could have fed two.

I later asked Arrigotti what the most popular menu item is, and he said, "Definitely the New York style reuben. We get a lot of compliments on those. We also have great pasta dishes and all of our soups are made in house, as are most of our sauces. Although we were already very proud of our food and recipes, we just flew in a world-renowned chef to do some consulting. We want to be known for our food in the way we are for our sports collections."

So next time you're looking for a slammin' place to get a special lunch, do a little celebrating or cheer for your favorite team, keep this local gem in mind. "See ya at Coops!"

horoscopes by Mystic Cat

Aries (March 21 - April 19): Can you hear the rhythm of the drums call to you? Prepare yourself the Ultimate Warrior. This week could prove challenging and you might need extra reinforcement.

Taurus (April 20 - May 20): Both your feet have been firmly planted on the ground for way too long. It's time to shake things up with an Earthquake.

Gemini (May 21 - June 20): If that silver tongue of yours ever finds itself parched this week, I highly suggest the 007. Don't be afraid to have more than one; we both know you won't be going home that night.

Cancer (June 21 - July 22): This week let someone else wait on you and mix the drinks. A suggestion, if I may, request a Passion Mimosa and a fruit salad.

Leo (July 23 - August 22): Enough of that munching on crab cakes while sucking down those carbonated beverages. Try something different and give in to the King's Ransom.

Virgo (August 23 - September 22): Have you ever felt the need to dress up so you can dine in style with your friend or partner? Don't lie, I know you do. I know that a graceful creature such as you deserves the pleasure of an Elegant Cocktail.

Libra (September 23 - October 22): It's high time you put your lover to work. First whip up a glass of Ambrosia and then lounge back onto

your favorite mounds of pillows, sip your cocktail as your dear one feeds you grapes.

Scorpio (October 23 - November 21): There's only one drink that can match that powerful, hidden nature of yours. That cocktail would be a Deep Dark Secret that only you can truly handle.

Sagittarius (November 22 - December 21): If there's one thing I can't stand, it's watching a magnificent beauty being trapped in a mundane life. For the sake of unbridled sanity, take a sip of the Wild Irish Rose.

Capricorn (December 22 - January 19): Finally a week you can kick back and relax. This is the perfect time to make some Easy Money. If you make enough, share some with your friends.

Aquarius (January 20 - February 18): You've been swamped, even lost in your projects. It's time to visit your long lost love, the laboratory, and create the Mad Scientist #2. Please be careful not to bring out your inner Hyde.

Pisces (February 19 - March 20): Some weeks may be hard; this week in particular will be so. However, I have good news. When things begin to hit rock bottom, take a deep breath and conjure yourself a true Fairytale.

All drinks and recipes can be found on www.cocktailplace.com



Tyler Kern Clackamas Print

Night riders banned from CCC

Jonny Alcott rides at the West Linn skatepark. Many Oregon High School and Clackamas Community College students are choosing to skate on campus, which is not allowed by campus security for liability and safety concerns. The campus may attract skateboarders because of the different terrain offered and the excitement of the risk involved in doing something that is against the rules. Violators who are caught are asked to leave campus.

— Compiled by Neil Lundin

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